

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claims 5-8 and AMEND claims 1 and 9-13 in accordance with the following:

1. (currently amended) A process apparatus, comprising:
a storage unit storing information about a discussion at an electronic conference; and
a judgment unit calculating an index ~~indicating~~ representing one of a number of speakers in the discussion, a number of utterances in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of the information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion as an indication of an amount of the information stored about the discussion, and
said judgment unit ~~judging whether deciding~~ to hold a face-to-face conference by comparing if the index ~~with~~ exceeds a specific value.
2. (original) The process apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising
a notification unit notifying participants of the electronic conference of a holding of the face-to-face conference if said judgment unit determines to hold the face-to-face conference.
3. (original) The process apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising
a reservation unit making reservations for facilities needed to hold the face-to-face conference if said judgment unit determines to hold the face-to-face conference,
said notification unit notifies expected participants of information about reserved facilities.
4. (original) The process apparatus according to claim 3, wherein
said reservation unit makes reservations for transportation needed for the expected participants to participate at the face-to-face conference; and
said notification unit notifies the expected participants of information about reserved transportation.

Claims 5-8 (canceled)

9. (currently amended) A process apparatus, comprising:
a storage unit storing information about a discussion at an electronic conference; and
a judgment unit calculating an index ~~indicating~~ representing one of a number of speakers in the discussion, a number of utterances in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of the information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion as an indication of a possibility of the discussion diverging, and said judgment unit ~~judging whether deciding to hold a face-to-face conference based on the index by comparing if the index with exceeds~~ a specific value.

10. (currently amended) A process apparatus for executing a process of an asynchronous electronic conference among a plurality of areas in a distributed environment, comprising:
a communications unit transmitting information about a discussion at the electronic conference between areas;
a storage unit storing the information about the discussion; and
a judgment unit judging whether to hold a face-to-face conference by comparing an indication of an amount of the stored information about the discussion with a specific value, the indication representing one of a number of speakers in the discussion, a number of utterances in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of the information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion.

11. (currently amended) A computer-readable storage medium on which is recorded a program enabling a computer to execute a process, said process comprising;
calculating an index representing one of a number of speakers in the discussion, a number of utterances in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of the information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion as indicating an amount of stored information about a discussion at an electronic conference; and
judging ~~whether to hold a face-to-face conference by comparing if the index with exceeds~~ a specific value.

12. (currently amended) A process method comprising;
recording information about a discussion at an electronic conference;
calculating an index representing one of a number of speakers in the discussion, a number of utterances in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of the information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion as indicating an amount of the information about the discussion; and
judging ~~whether to hold a face-to-face conference by comparing if~~ the index with exceeds a specific value.

13. (currently amended) A process apparatus, comprising:
storage means for storing information about a discussion at an electronic conference;
and
judgment means for calculating an index representing one of a number of speakers in the discussion, a number of utterances in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of the information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion as indicating an amount of the information stored about the discussion and for judging ~~whether to hold a face-to-face conference by comparing if~~ the index with exceeds a specific value.